

SportsNutrition

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FOODS HIGHEST IN CARBOHYDRATES

For optimal health and sports performance, you should choose grain-based foods, vegetables, fruits and juices for both your daily training diet and for precompetition meals. Here are some suggestions.

Spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, and other plain pastas

Top pasta with tomato sauce to add more carbohydrates. Be cautious of casseroles, lasagnas and other pasta-entrees with lots of meat, cheese, or oil that contributes to "fat loading" rather than carbo-loading.

Rice

Steamed or boiled rice is preferable to chinese fried rice (saturated with oil and calories from fat). When possible, choose brown rice; it has more nutritional value than does white rice.

Potato, sweet potato, yams

Limit fatty french fries but enjoy potatoes that are baked, boiled or mashed (with minimal butter). Add moistness to a baked potato by mashing it with milk or topping it with lite sour cream.

Stuffing

A tasty, carbohydrate-rich change from pasta and potato. Store-bought stuffings are very quick and easy to prepare. Just add hot water and, if desired, some raisins and diced apples for extra carbs.

Couscous, millet, bulgar, kasha, barley

Wholesome alternatives to the standard dinner starches and a creative addition to casseroles and meals. Couscous cooks very quickly; the others take more time, so cook them in quantity for leftovers.

Dried beans (such as pinto, black, garbanzo), split peas, lentils

Chili beans, split pea soup, lentils, refried beans, baked beans, limas, and other beans are excellent sources of carbohydrates, protein and fiber. Caution: large portions may lead to digestive problems!

Bread, rolls, tortillas, wraps

Try to choose hearty, whole grain products made from whole wheat, oatmeal, rye, and corn to get more fiber and nutritional value than offered by refined, white flour products. Add butter sparingly, if at all, to breads so that you fill up on carbohydrates and not on butter (fat).

Pretzels, air-popped popcorn, lowfat crackers, baked chips

These lowfat munchies are preferable to greasy potato chips, tortilla chips, and crackers that leave you with greasy fingertips because they contain significant amounts of saturated (trans) fats. Look for lowfat snacks, including baked chips and baked or reduced-fat crackers.

When making popcorn, pop the kernels in minimal canola oil or use an air-popper. Commercially bagged popcorn or the microwave oven brands generally contain at least half of the calories from fat. Even the "lite" brands can be deceptively high in fat and relatively low in carbs.

Hot cereal

Add raisins, banana, dried fruit, brown sugar, or maple syrup for extra carbohydrates. Any hot cereal is a good choice, with oatmeal and oatbran being particularly heart-healthy. Whole grain cereals such as Wheatena and Maltex offer wholesome goodness; Cream of Wheat is an iron-rich choice. By mixing or alternating cereals (such as Wheatena with Cream of Wheat), you'll enhance your nutrient intake.